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ABSTRACT

Ideas for putting the principles of faculty development into program form are discussed. The pitfalls of faculty development efforts are examined: the frustration of false expectations, the problem of fully integrating the program into the college community, the challenge of maintaining program momentum over time, and the inability to secure or maintain administrative support. The program planning process described is designed to avoid these problems. It has four phases: gathering and analyzing information, developing realistic goals, implementing activities, and developing assessment procedures. The last phase, in turn, provides for gathering information and returning to the first phase, to again begin the process. A diagram and brief bibliography are provided. (MSE)

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A MODEL FOR PLANNING PROGRAMS IN FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

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A Model for Planning Programs in Faculty Development

by John Anderson and Joan North

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I Introduction

There appears to be no end to suggestion for activities one may do as part of a program in faculty development. Workshops, classroom videotaping , faculty teas, teaching evaluation, mini-grants. One article identified 142 options as a beginning list.[1] What seems to be missing from the literature is some consideration of a systematic process for planning, implementing and evaluating a faculty development program in a way which maximizes its chances for success. This paper will not tell you how to run a workshop, nor will it give you the telephone number of the hotest consultants in faculty development. Rather, it is our intention to help those who have some basic knowledge of faculty development concepts by suggesting specific ways that they might go about developing or re-developing their programs.

II Pitfalls

Faculty development programs of some complexion are said to now exist on half of the campuses in the country.[2] This spread suggests that many schools have enough experience with this activity to have identified stumbling blocks. Our review of programs in faculty development suggests that many of these efforts face four basic pitfalls: the frustration of false expectations, the problem of fully integrating

a program into the life of the college community, the challenge of maintaining momentum over extended periods of time, and the inability to secure or maintain administrative support.

Frustrations from False Expectations

The people actively involved in faculty development programs entertain some hopes that their efforts will "make a difference" or even change the institution. They all commit energy and time which could be directed elsewhere. And yet, after several years of workshops and the browsing library, many of these originally excited and hopeful faculty perceive little change, little difference in their colleagues or in the college itself. On a micro level, even the sponsored activities may have the tendency to spawn disillusionment. In many campus settings, a faculty development program begins with a workshop experience, which actually may be the beginning of problems. Consider first the artificiality of the environment for most faculty development workshops. Time is collapsed in role playing; activities "begin" and "end" at a specific time; participants grow to be open, friendly and honest about their feelings. No matter how well the leaders prepare the participants for the problems of "re-entry", many faculty developers sense the continuing frustration of dealing with the real world where change takes forever, and personality clashes inhibit progress. The initial dream was to recreate the workshop environment on the campus. Since this is never possible, few look forward

to setting goals for faculty development programs which have contact with reality.

Problems of Integration

Have you ever thought about the degree of isolation which many faculty members feel? Often we feel alone in the classroom. Scholarly activity (including development of course materials) is usually done while we are alone. Professionally, we are seldom integrated into some larger community of teachers, despite attempts at team teaching, core curricula and interdisciplinary studies.

Given this background, it is not too surprising that our faculty development programs are not easily integrated into the mainstream of institutional life: we simply are not accustomed to working in tandem with one another or with other offices. Such isolation perhaps serves the useful purpose of preserving the faculty identity of the program, but such separateness also reduces the impact which the program might have upon the rest of the institution. All too often a group of interested faculty undertake some development activities (let's say growth contracting) only to find that the institution is not equipped to handle even minimal requests which are generated from their activities.

The Challenge of Momentum

Consider the number of changes that constantly flow in your college. Each year brings a new group of students (with new learning styles?); administrators come and go;

members of the faculty development team take a leave of absence, or become interested in other things; accreditation reviews intervene and campus interest shifts to new issues. What a challenge to maintain momentum in faculty development in the midst of such change!

Other, more personal, forces also challenge momentum. In the beginning the team was in the spotlight. Team members became "experts" and perhaps did some off-campus consulting. But as the visibility shifts, as the calls for outside consulting decrease, as the "soft money" vanishes, there is a natural waning of interest. People often shift to other activities unconsciously seeking new spotlights.

There is also the "what do we do next?" problem. You have run "brown bag lunches"; individuals have had their classes videotaped; and workshops on "value clarification" and "life planning" were well received. Now what? Should you do this all over again, hoping to attract new audiences? Do you go on to other things? Maintaining momentum becomes a real problem.

Maintaining Administrative Support

A problem related to the previous ones is the difficulty of maintaining (or establishing) administrative support. The flurry of outside funding for faculty development during the last several years, while providing essential impetus for many colleges, relieved many campus administrators of having to declare their support for faculty development with a

piece of the budget. Those budget decisions that now face many colleges have not revealed an overwhelming "hurray" on the part of the decisionmakers.

Faculty development funds tend to have an air of luxury or or at least enrichment instead of necessity. When institutional funds must be trimmed, the enrichment activities are most vulnerable. Too seldom is the case made on campuses that faculty development is not a frill, but a good investment. And too few programs operate and evaluate to prove the point.

One may rightfully object that this picture of faculty development is overly pessimistic. Often there is a sustained growth of interest in teaching. Many exciting things are happening in faculty development. However, it is our opinion that the pitfalls are real and that not enough attention has been given to processes which might avoid those pitfalls.

The pitfall of false expectations may be solved by designing a program which has realistic goals. The problem of integration might be minimized when formal structures are developed so that the faculty development program is tied to the larger effort of institutional development. Momentum can be maintained by devising mechanisms for self-renewal. Maintaining administrative support becomes more probable when adequate attention to program evaluation is given and when the program is integrated into perceived institutional development. It all sounds so simple, yet such words are all so abstract that they lose much of their meaning. The challenge is to create ways for translating

such abstractness into practice. The next section of this paper describes a process for avoiding the pitfalls we have been discussing.

III A Model for Planning in Faculty Development

Overview

The process which we are suggesting for overcoming these pitfalls contains four phases: gathering and analyzing of information, developing realistic goals, implementing activities, and developing assessment procedures. The latter provides some of the information that is necessary to return to the first stage and to begin the process once again. Each phase also incorporates three distinct steps: the first involves planning of that phase; the second activity is designed to implement this phase; and the third establishes the procedure for assessing the outcome of activities and so begin the planning for the next stage. Thus at the beginning of each phase, it is suggested that careful consideration be given to what will be done, not only to assure that things get accomplished but perhaps more importantly, to assure that the appropriate people know what to expect from your activities. After implementation of the activities of each phase, they must be assessed so that one can get the personal satisfaction of knowing just how "successful" that activity was, as well as to determine the adequacy of the previous stage. Figure I outlines the elements of this total process.

FIGURE I PROCESS MODEL
FOR PLANNING FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

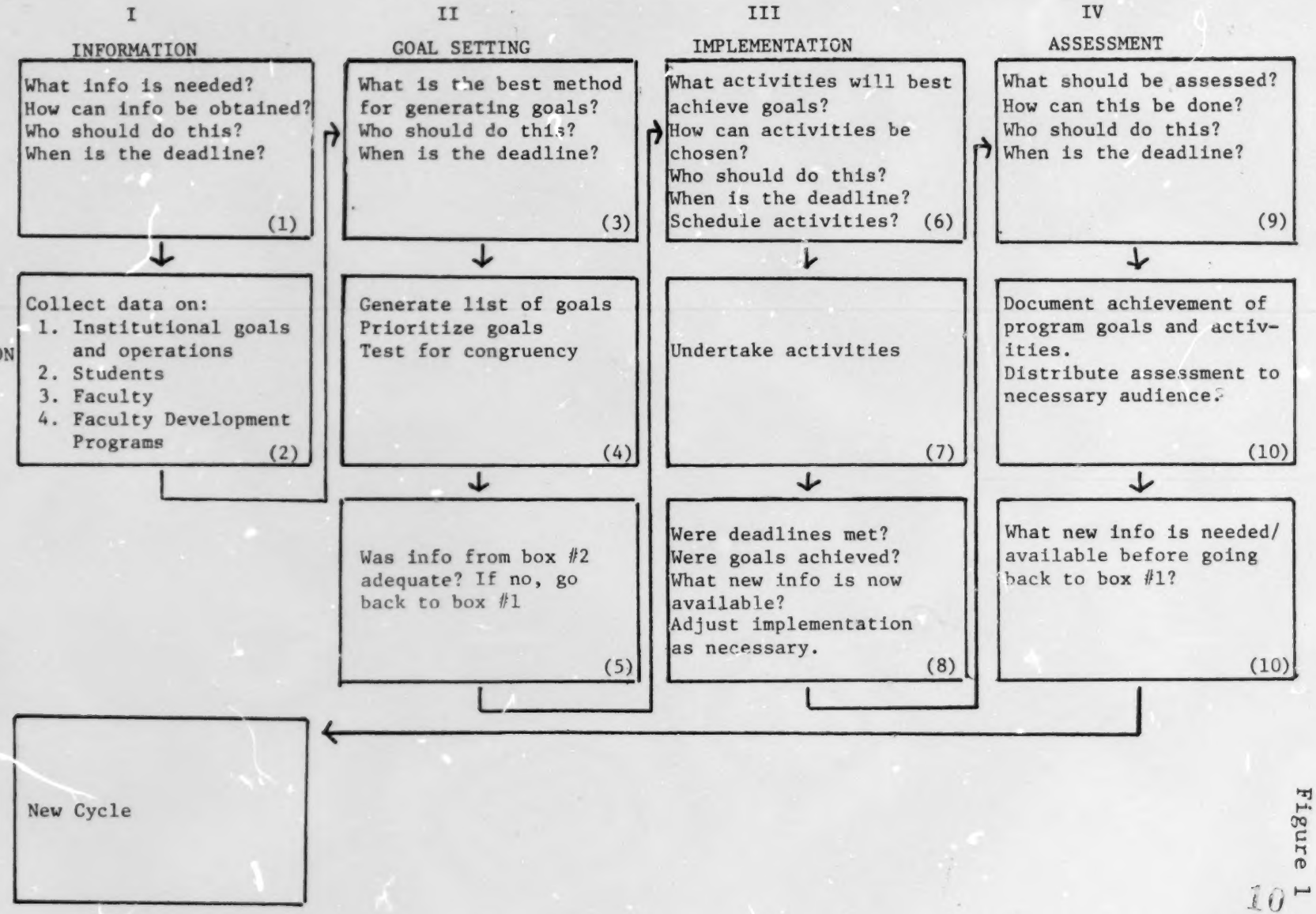

Figure 1

While this process may seem time consuming, note the advantages that can be obtained by such a process. First, by developing activities that are firmly grounded in planning (including the gathering and analysis of information), the activities are consistently being rooted in reality. Second, the planning phase should force the planners of faculty development activities to consider if their efforts are congruent with goals of the institution. Finally, by building assessment into each phase of the process (we prefer that word to evaluation in order to stress the constructive role of feedback), those in charge of the effort can feel the psychological satisfaction of knowing when a particular activity is completed and thereby gain energy for undertaking the next step.

Phase I - Information Gathering and Analysis

Step A - Planning for Phase I

Prior to actually gathering information for planning faculty development activities, consideration should be given to the type of information that is needed as well as to how such information might be best obtained. Questions which should be considered include: What information do we want? What will we do with this information when we get it? Is the information already available or will we have to gather it? Who should undertake this task? How will we know when we have collected enough information? Who should analyze the data? What decisions must be made? When will

we complete Phase I? (A plan, complete with timetables, should be developed for Phase I.)

Step B - Implementation

We suggest there are four catagories of information that should be considered. They include information on (1) institutional goals and characteristics, (2) student characteristics and needs, (3) faculty characteristics and needs, (4) faculty development programs both on campus and elsewhere.

(1) Institutional goals and operations

Many faculty development programs plan their activities based on questionnaires sent to faculty about their preferences and characteristics. Few attempt to make the same judgments about the institution itself. If the faculty development effort is to be consistent with institutional realities and a part of institutional development, then data about the school needs to be gathered.

While nearly all schools have some sort of goal statement (even if it is only in the catalogue for purposes of public relations), the usual problem is to translate these general statements into specifics that might pertain to the faculty development program. This problem is usually resolved by intuition. An institutional goal to "upgrade" the faculty results in an expanded program for leaves to earn advanced degrees. When the priorities shift to a concern over faculty that is "overtenured", consideration is given to more refined methods of faculty evaluation. A new commitment to

"nontraditional students" may result in programs for obtaining faculty who can teach remedial courses. One of the great advantages of a formalized long range planning process is that information on such goals and priorities can easily be obtained by those interested in faculty development. In the absence of such planning, more informal conversation with administrators, trustees and others will be necessary.[3]

Other questions to be considered might be: What is the financial situation likely to be? How do we tend to operate, formally or informally? What are enrollment trends?

(2) Information on students

Knowing the characteristics of your student body has become increasingly important these days since student needs seem to be shifting so rapidly. A few years ago many students were interested in the "Greening of America"; today cynics say they seem more concerned with the green of a dollar bill. As colleges consider data on the projected size of the 18-22 year old group, the traditional years for going to college, many colleges will either have to develop new student markets or go out of business. Therefore, it seems critical that data be gathered on student backgrounds, their different learning styles, their expectations from college, their career aspirations, and the current status of student-faculty interaction. What help is being given to faculty members who must adjust to new student needs? Is attrition concentrated in a particular semester, program or department? Can faculty development reduce the causes of that attrition? Students pay most of the bills - their needs are an important

input into any faculty development effort.

(3) Information on the faculty

All too often faculty "developers" assume that their own needs are shared by most of their colleagues and that a faculty development program which fulfills their needs will appeal to a significant group on campus. But how many programs consider the special needs which new faculty members bring to campus, or the special problems that stricter evaluation procedures place on those who evaluate as well as those being evaluated? What is the state of faculty morale? What teaching styles are used and do they match student learning styles? Is there a significant number of the faculty who are simply tired of teaching? Do some people feel a need to improve their advising? A successful program in faculty development must respond to a wide range of faculty (as well as institutional and student) needs.

There are a variety of sources of information on the faculty. Data on the age distribution and turnover should be available from the adminstration. Information on less tangible factors such as "morale" may require special questionnaires.

Discussions with "respected" faculty leaders may be helpful but consideration should also be given to talking to those faculty members who may lack such informal authority. If the objective of faculty development effort is to have a broad impact upon the institution then a wide variety of opinions should be considered.

(4) Faculty Development programs on and off campus

All campuses have supported faculty development activities in some form: sabbaticals, travel funds to conferences, faculty colloquia or workshops are not new activities. Before launching grand plans for a "new" program, you should first consider previous (as well as ongoing) activities to determine how effective they were and how your own activities can build upon their successes, as well as failures. Who has attended past faculty development activities? What benefits did they gain from such experiences? Why do some attack "faculty development"? How can you better inform the community of the goals of your program?

While it is necessary to tailor a faculty development program to respond to the unique characteristics of your own situation it is often useful to get new ideas from the experiences of others. But be careful - what works for someone else may not work for you given the differences in your (1) institutional goals and operation, (2) student body, and (3) faculty needs.

Phase II - Setting Program Goals

Once information has been obtained about your college, then it is time to begin to set goals for your faculty development program. If we had to identify one major weakness of most programs, it would be that clearly defined (and even measurable) goals were not established. Without goals, activities - no matter how well planned - often have no integrating rationale. Activities which might build upon each other may result in conflict. Activities are not ends in themselves - to sponsor a workshop on new teaching techniques is fine, but the real issue is what impact does that workshop have upon the institution, the students, and the faculty.

Step A - Planning for Phase II

The first step of the goal setting phase is similar to the first step of the information gathering phase - you should plan how the goal setting will occur. Here the critical element concerns the "ownership" of the program; a decision on this issue depends in large part upon the information gathered in Phase I. For example, if it appears that the institution is going to expand its programs for the "non-traditional student" but the faculty morale is low because this move is perceived as a threat to traditional ways of teaching, then the goal of the faculty development program may be to equip the faculty to deal more effectively with these new students - but the process of setting that goal must have broad faculty participation that attempts to deal

with the morale problem. If the institution is not planning significant changes in its goals, but students are dissatisfied with the advising "system", then the planning process may be restricted to those who are currently concerned with student development. This planning for goal setting should have a definite timetable and specific people should be made responsible for the effort. Adhering to this strategy will help avoid getting bogged down in planning with little else being accomplished.

Step B - Goal Setting

Goal setting can be difficult, time consuming and imprecise, but if adequate planning has occured, the process need not be overly frustrating especially if the goals are specific in nature and refer to a limited time period (such as an academic year). Throughout the process it should be remembered that goals are simply bridges between the information stage (and what IS) and future activities (and what SHOULD be).

It might be useful to conceptualize goal setting as a three staged process. First, one attempts to generate as many options as possible.[4] Next, out of this array of possibilities some priorities are established. And finally, you should carefully insure that these prioritized goals are congruent with the information obtained in phase one.

Step C - Assessment

Having used the information from Phase I to help generate

and refine goals, this is a good time to evaluate the usefulness of the information which was obtained. Was it adequate for making decisions on goals or would additional information have been more useful? If you now conclude that Phase I was inadequate, you might want to set as a goal the collection and analysis of additional information before going on to Phase III - Implementation Activities.

Phase III - Implementation Activities

The implementation phase of this process is where most faculty development teams begin. This phase brings you out of the conference room and into the "real world", and most of us are so task oriented that "doing" is a welcomed relief from "planning". The number of possible activities is staggering, so planning for the activities stage is especially important.

Step A - Planning for Phase III

Your first task is to plan the implementation process and the method for chosing activities that will best accomplish the goals which have been established for your faculty development program. Another thing to be considered is who will be responsible for the design of activities with specific goals so that assessment is easily accomplished.

Successful achievement of each goal may depend on having several strategies for obtaining a particular goal. For example, if the goal is to increase a sense of community within

the faculty (as evidences by x amount of increased faculty interaction), you may choose (1) a workshop strategy with the specific activity being a workshop on interdisciplinary teaching and/or (2) a discussion strategy with the specific activity being the creation of a faculty lounge. Bergquist and Phillips suggest eleven different strategies as well as a host of activities. You may want to think of others.[5] Activities seem to be limited only by one's imagination.

Step B - Implementation

We have already suggested that the actual implementation of the activities may be the easiest (and most enjoyable) aspect of the entire process. The only caution we have is that one should be sure that the person who is given responsibility for a particular activity is commited to the success of that activity. Often that simply means that the person will get personal satisfaction from the task. But the person must have some authority (perhaps just informal authority from a group) which matches the new responsibility. Moreover "reasonable" (but still precise) deadlines should be established, for they give the psychological satisfaction of having completed a task "on time". If unforeseen situations arise these deadlines can be changed, and again the challenge is to move quickly as possible from planning to implementation.

Step C - Assessment of Activities

As we have already emphasized there is a need for continually reassessing the results of each stage of this process.

If a workshop was run on schedule, attended by the expected number of participants, and deamed a "success" by them, one is not finished with that activity. The workshop experience itself might have uncovered new information which should become a vital input for the information stage and the whole process can begin again. In this way the assessment of an activity can become the critical force for maintaining momentum of the program.

Phase IV - Program Assessment

The division of each phase of this process into three separate steps (planning, implementation, and assessment) was possible because each step could be placed in a time framework with a deadline. Naturally it is necessary to consider the assessment of the overall program but, this also requires placing the whole process into a similar timeframe with "deadlines". There are problems creating this time structure. The first problem concerns the duration of the cycle. One possibility is to consider a complete cycle of this process occurring over the academic year. Thus, information might be gathered during the summer, goal setting occurs in September, activities are offered during the rest of the school year, and assessments are made in June with new plans for information gathering for that summer. But over-structuring can obviously occur when such a cycle precludes scheduling a workshop before school opens, or waiting until the summer to gather information on emerging institutional goals. Thus the challenge is to maintain the proper tension between

regularity and flexibility. Regularity aids assessment - it gives time for a thorough examination of the goals which were set and the extent to which they were fulfilled. But flexibility is also needed in order to respond to new information and to schedule events which will maximize the chances of success for a particular activity.

Therefore it is wise to schedule a period for assessment at the end of the "cycle". Perhaps at a weekend retreat after graduation you could assess the past year's program and begin to plan for the next cycle. This assessment process (when properly planned and implemented) will avoid inertia for the program over the summer and so avoid the problem of momentum which plagues most programs.[6]

Step A - Planning for Phase IV

Regardless of the form the timetable or the infrequency of assessment, a plan for assessment should be determined prior to finalizing program plans. Often assessment can become a tool to keep programs headed toward their goals, especially if the types of assessment are known early. In this stage, you should determine how you will decide what will be your assessment plan and determine the plan itself. As with the other stages, timetables and responsibility should be identified.

Step B - Implementation

Your assessment activities, occurring throughout the year or at one time, can be challenging especially if you are using the feedback to seriously judge your activities

and to work with administrators and faculty on the "future" of faculty development. Typical assessment include paper and pencil evaluation of workshops or other activities, opinion questionnaires about the program,or external evaluators. Some schools are beginning to measure performance or impact against earlier established goals for the program. The latter may have more influence within the institution, especially if there was some consensus about the importance of goals.

There may also be a wider, though less used set of assessment activities. Unobtrusive measures, for example, might reveal a 30% increase in coffee consumed at the faculty lounge, or 28% increase in faculty requests for media equipment or a .2% increase in senior scores on the GRE or a 4% decrease in student complaints about teaching coming to the Dean's office.

Step C - Assessment

It may seem strange to suggest assessing the Assessment Phase, but since this phase is as critical as the other three, some evaluation of the methods, process and results seems important. You find yourself "knowing" your activities had a positive impact on morale, but stradled with an assessment procedure which ignores morale. Or you find your assessment reveals nothing - positive or negative. In any case, assess your assessment process.

IV Conclusion

In some respects the model for planning faculty development programs is commonsense, and thus could apply to other developmental or change efforts on campus. The point here is not to suggest novelty, but to insure faculty development efforts that matter, that do make a difference, that grow with the people, faculty and college.

1 David G. Brown and William S. Hanger, "Pragmatics of Faculty Self-Development," Educational Record, Summer 1975, pp. 201-206.

2 Charles Fisher, "The Evaluation and Development of College and University Administrators," Research Currents, March 1977, pp. 3-6.

3 A special case may arise if there appears to be no consensus about institutional goals and priorities. When this occurs the first priority for faculty development may be to undertake activities which will obtain some consensus. See, William Bergquist and Steven Phillips, A Handbook for Faculty Development, Vol. II (Washington, D.C.: Council for the Advancement of Small Colleges), 1977, Chapter Two.

4 See, Bergquist and Phillips, Vol. II, pp. 137-139 for suggested techniques.

5 See, William Bergquist and Steven Phillips, A Handbook for Faculty Development, Vol. I (Washington, D.C.: Council for the Advancement of Small Colleges), 1975, pp. 260-266.

6 See Bergquist and Phillips, A Handbook for Faculty Development, Vol. II, Chapter Fourteen; contains extensive discussion of program evaluation methods.